

To: Matthew[mbetenso@blm.gov]; to: Backer, Dana[dbacker@blm.gov]; Cynthia[cstaszak@blm.gov]; Larry Crutchfield[lcrutchf@blm.gov]; Paul Leatherbury[pleather@blm.gov]; to: Brian Bremner[engineer@color-country.net]; Tyler Hoskins[Tyler.Hoskins@jviation.com]; Lars Anderson[landerson@pec.us.com]
From: Bellenger, Gail
Sent: 2017-11-01T13:54:29-04:00
Importance: Normal
Subject: HITRR-open house materials-updated
Received: 2017-11-01T13:55:17-04:00
[Final Open House Comment Form.pdf](#)
[2017 FAQ FINAL.pdf](#)
[Final Open House Boards reduced.pdf](#)

Hi, all,

I have made additional corrections and updates to the open house materials. Please review, again, and let me know if I missed anything! Thank you.

Gail

--

Gail Bellenger, M.A., RPA

Environmental Manager

Direct: (801) 858-3334

Cell: (805) 861-9800

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Hole-in-the-Rock Road Repair Project Comment Form

Please submit
comments by
November 9, 2017

Please Print Information Clearly

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Organization/Business (if applicable): _____ Title: _____

Garfield County and the Bureau of Land Management are seeking public input on the proposed Hole-in-the-Rock Road Repair Project Environmental Assessment. The project supporting documents are available from the BLM's national NEPA register: <https://go.usa.gov/xRz8R>. Please write legibly. If more space is needed, please use reverse side or attach additional sheets. If you would like to submit your comments electronically, please send them to Matt Betenson at BLM_UT_GS_comments@blm.gov.

Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identification information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment, including your personal identification information, may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold this information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.



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HOLE-IN-THE-ROCK ROAD REPAIR PROJECT-ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT



Background

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For over twenty years, Hole-in-the-Rock Road (HITRR) has been maintained by continuously using heavy equipment to flatten washboarding, construct wing ditches, repair muddy areas, and utilize spot gravelling. The result is a deteriorated road condition which continues to widen and entrench, causing increased erosion on and around the road. This creates impassable muddy areas.

This project is to restore and repair the HITRR as a natural surface road that will improve driving safety and visitor experience, provide for better drainage, require less maintenance, and protect resources along the road.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), working with Garfield County, proposes to improve the shape of the road from Highway 12 to the Kane County boundary line by:

- Restoring a crown and ditch road profile and providing improved drainage.
- Restoring the road to a consistent width of approximately 26 feet.
- Rehabilitating and revegetating all reclaimed areas.
- Grading adjacent slopes, which may be required to build a crown profile where entrenched.
- Evaluating culvert systems at ephemeral wash crossings for peak flow flood capacity.



Water collected at the side of the roadway



Alvey Wash. Large culverts fill with sediment during storm events



Stretch of muddy road where visitors have driven off the roadway



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Maintenance on the Road



The proposed project would repair the natural surface road, with gravel placed in problem areas. This grading and drainage project would result in a crown and ditch road bed that will help the road shed water and return it to a consistent width.

- Hole-in-the-Rock Road is currently graded approximately 20 times each summer, creating additional costs to Garfield County. Regular grading also causes degradation of the road base due to constant manipulation, which creates hazardous driving conditions for visitors.
- Heavy equipment will only be staged in previously disturbed areas.

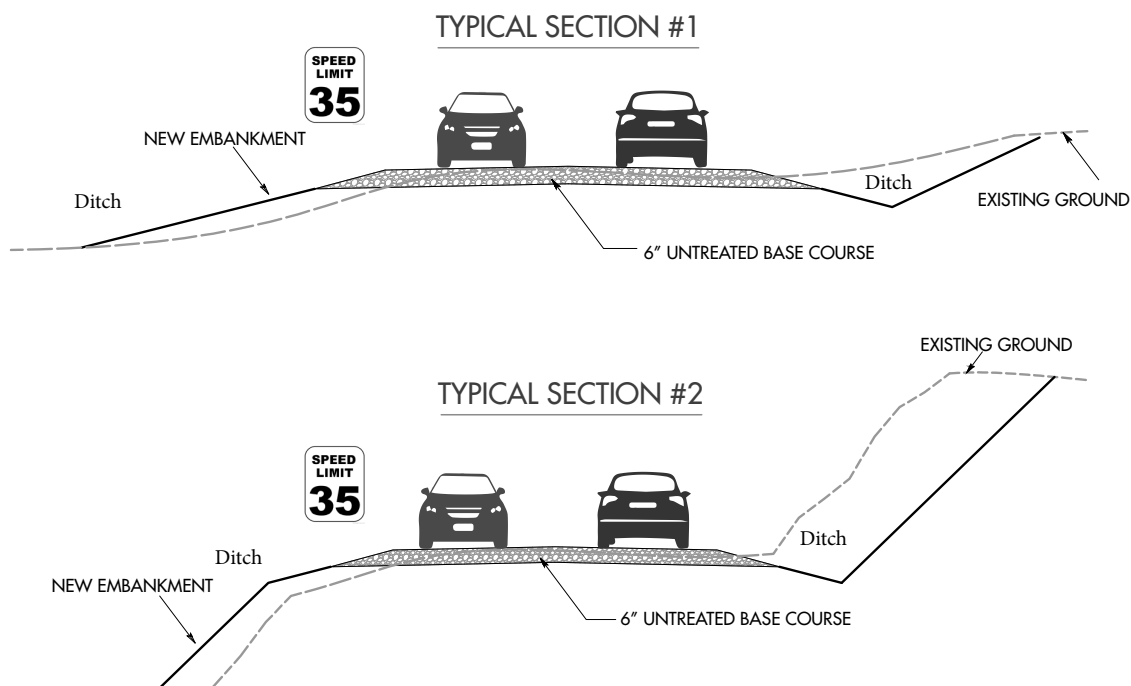


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Typical Cross Section

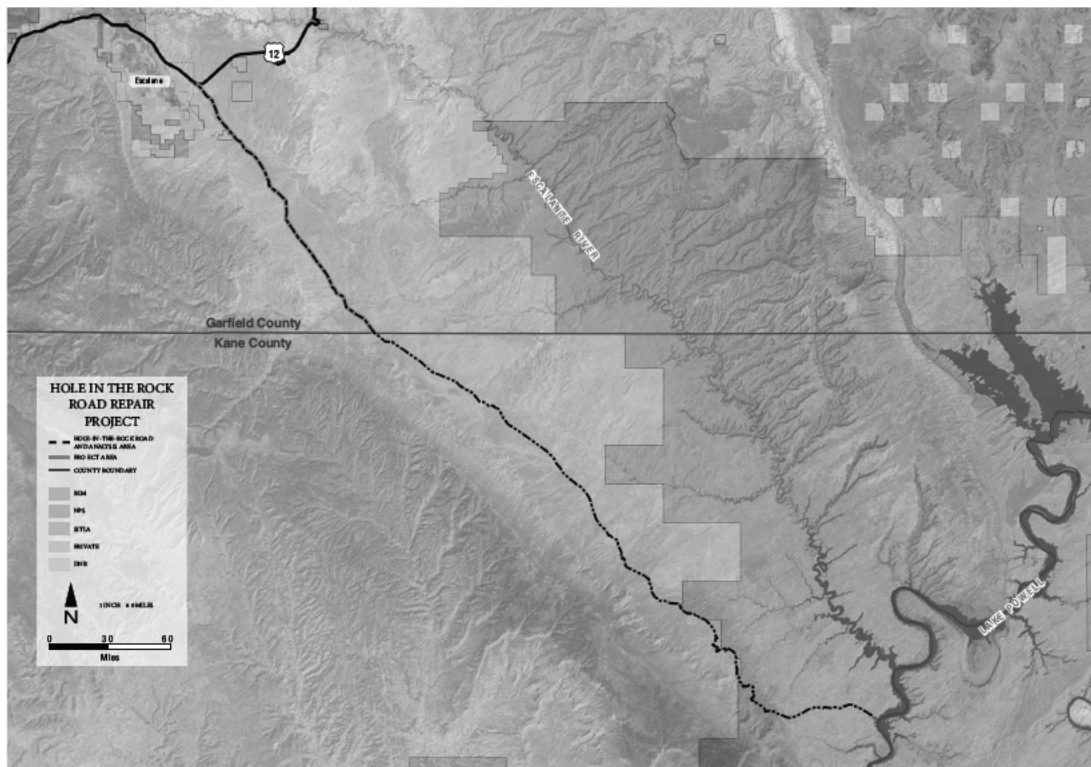
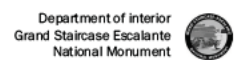
DESIGN STANDARDS:
SHOULDERS: 2 FT WIDE, TRAVEL LANES: 11 FT WIDE, DESIGN SPEED: 50 MPH



- Hole-in-the Rock Road is currently designed for 50+ mph for most of its length.
- This project would maintain the existing alignment, however, a 35 mph speed limit would continue to be posted along the road for safety considerations.



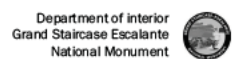
Project Corridor



- The proposed project will be in Garfield County only.
- A total of 23 culverted washes are located along Hole-in-the-Rock Road in Garfield County.
- Of the 23 culverted washes, 16 will be repaired, either with new culverts or modifications to existing culverts. Alvey Wash and Twentymile Wash have designs pending for new pipe culverts, pipe arch, or bridge structures to span the wash.



Road Design Rendering



CONCEPTUAL RENDERING OF REPAIRS



BEFORE



AFTER



BEFORE



AFTER

- In locations where the road is deeply entrenched, adjacent slopes may need to be contoured and revegetated.
- Over time, vegetation will naturally move into the disturbed areas along the road.



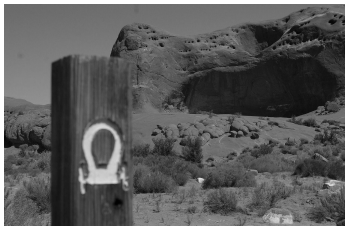
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Environmental Resources for Analysis



Devil's Garden, one of the many natural resources along the road.



Hole-in-the-Rock Trail marker.



Native American rock art.

The Hole in the Rock Road closely follows the route of the 1879 Hole in the Rock trek, an epic journey in which members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints (LDS), also known as Mormons, established a more direct route across the Colorado River to the southeastern corner of Utah to settle at Fort Bluff along the San Juan River.

This journey is noted in the GSENM Proclamation, "The monument has a long and dignified human history: it is a place where one can see how nature shapes human endeavors in the American West... Early Mormon pioneers left many historic objects....and built and traversed the renowned Hole in the Rock Trail as party of their epic colonization efforts."

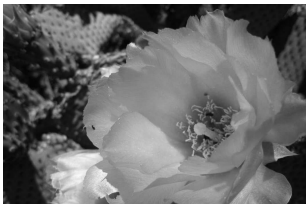
The project's effect on many resources will be analyzed including vegetation, wildlife, soil, recreation, wilderness character, cultural resources and others.



The project includes analysis of impacts to the ecosystem. This includes soils, wildlife, threatened and endangered species, vegetation and water.



An example of an ephemeral wash along the road.



Pink prickly pear flower.



Indian paintbrush.



Greater short-horned lizard.

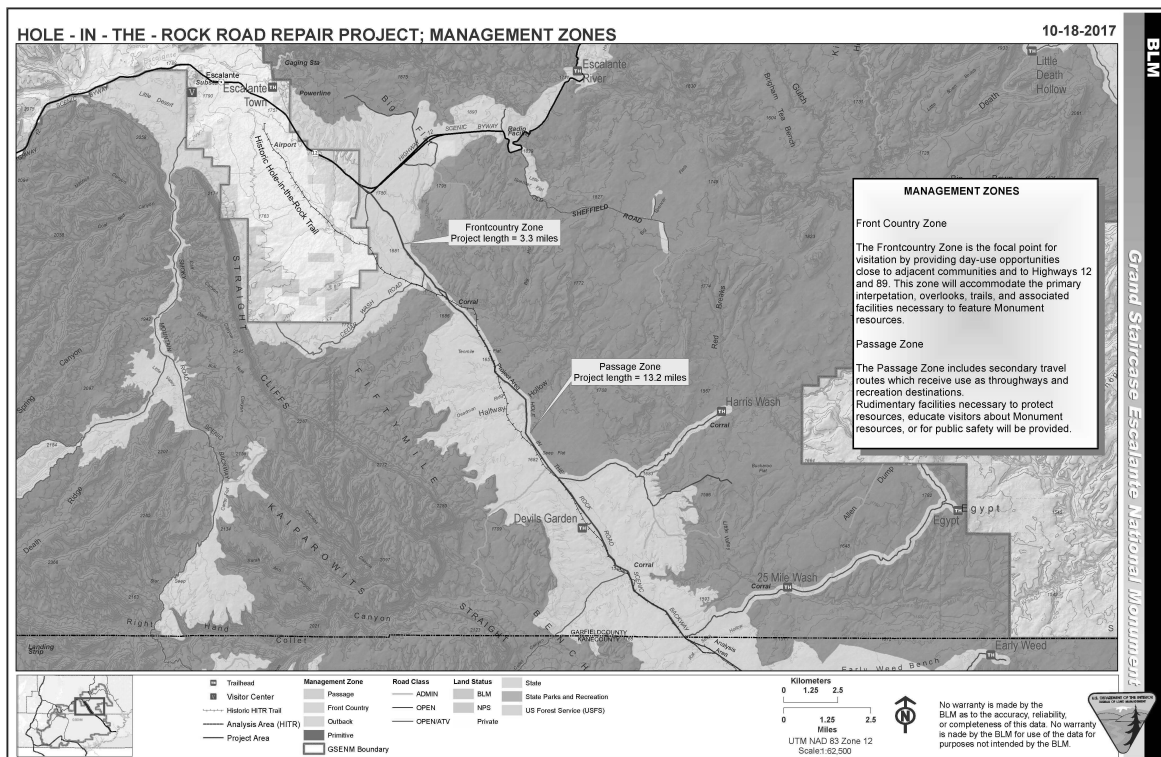


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Management Zones



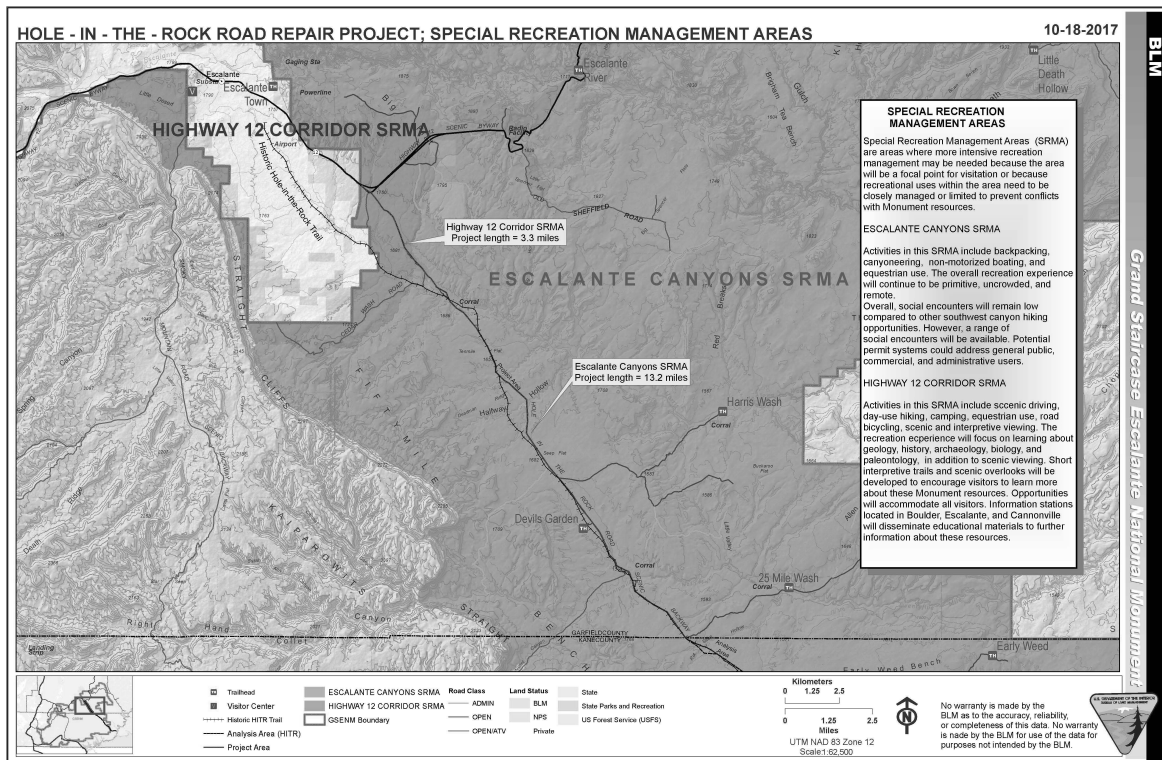


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Special Recreation Management Areas



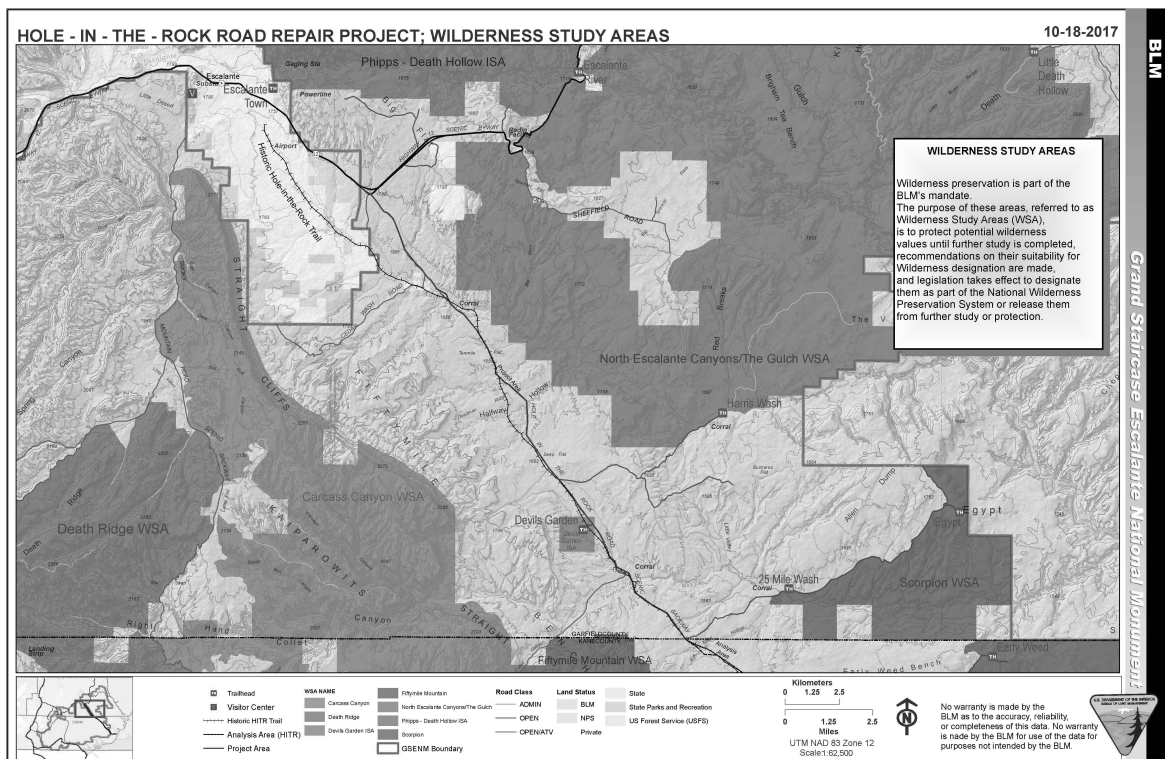


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Wilderness Study Areas



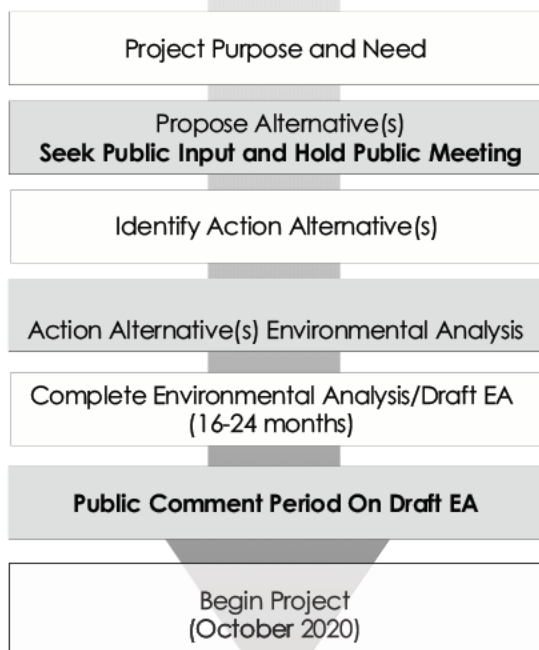


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Schedule & EA Process



← We are here!

Comment Process

1) Fill out a comment form at this meeting and submit it to the project team.

2) Submit a comment via email at

BLM UT GS comments@blm.gov

3) Mail comments to Matt Betenson, BLM Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, 669 S. Highway 89A, Kanab, UT 84741.

Please visit the project website for additional information.

<https://go.usa.gov/xRz8R>

Comments should be received by

November 9, 2017



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Hole-in-the-Rock Road Repair Project

Department of interior
Grand Staircase Escalante
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Frequently Asked Questions

The Hole in the Rock Road (HITRR), a State Scenic Backway, is located in Garfield and Kane Counties, Utah, on lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and National Park Service. HITRR is a gravel and dirt road accessed via Utah State Route 12 between the towns of Escalante and Boulder, Utah. From the HITRR northern intersection with Utah State Route 12, the first 52 miles of the road are within GSENM with the last nine miles traversing Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (GLCA) lands.

Why is work on the road happening?

Hole in the Rock Road is maintained numerous times a year due to weather and traffic related needs. Over time, this has resulted in deteriorating road conditions as the road continues to widen and entrench. Many segments of HITRR become impassable due to inclement weather, which has created hazardous conditions for visitors. The BLM, working with Garfield County, is proposing to address issues such as road bed erosion, down cutting, and flooding at ephemeral washes. Repairing the road would enable effective long term maintenance and protect resources found along the road.



Stretch of muddy road where visitors have driven off the roadway.

What type of changes are being made to the road?

The road will remain in the current alignment with no significant changes. A crown and ditch profile would be restored to the road to facilitate drainage and lessen future maintenance needs. A road surface of approximately 26 feet wide would be established. Some areas where the road is too wide would be reclaimed through revegetation. In locations where the road is deeply entrenched, adjacent slopes may need to be contoured and revegetated. Sections of the natural surface road may continue to be gravelled in problem areas. At wash crossings, the current culvert system will be evaluated for water flow and sediment loading needs which may suggest replacement or improvement of these culverts.



Natural surface of the road.

How often is the road closed?

The road may close several times a year during the monsoon season, mostly in Kane County, except during major flooding events. Increasingly, visitors are becoming stranded in the area due to road damage and floods.



Large ephemeral wash.

How many vehicles use the road each day?

On a daily average, more than 100 vehicles travel along the road.

What funds will be used for this project?

Garfield County, the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT), and the BLM have teamed together to fund the project.

Will the road be closed during construction?

No, the road will remain open during construction activities. However, some short term delays may occur.

What is the speed limit on the road?

A 35 mph speed limit will be posted along the road for safety considerations. However, the new road design will maintain the existing alignment, which is designed for a 50 mph speed limit.



Alvey Wash. Large culverts fill with sediment during storm events.



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Frequently Asked Questions (con't)

Is this project compatible with the BLM's management plan?

Yes. This project conforms to the Management Plan's Transportation and Access decisions related to road system maintenance. Transportation maintenance decisions allow for routes to be maintained within the disturbed travel surface and specifically allow for stabilization of washout prone areas to prevent erosion and sediment loading in drainages on the Hole in the Rock Road.

Are the repairs also extending into Kane County?

No, Garfield County has the authority to work only within their county, and the project funding only accommodates work in Garfield County.

Are wash crossings going to be considered?

An array of water crossings will be analyzed during the environmental assessment process. Large floods in 2013 created huge safety hazards for the public at some locations.

Where will heavy equipment be staged?

All staging of heavy equipment will be in previously disturbed areas.

What is the time frame and duration of the project?

Preliminary engineering and environmental analysis will be completed in the next 16 to 24 months, with construction funding available in October 2020.

What are the next steps?

A draft Environmental Assessment will be prepared once environmental resources have been analyzed for impacts. Draft documents will be distributed for review in print and posted on the project website at:

<https://go.usa.gov/xRz8R>

How can I make comments about the project?

Comments can be made at the public meetings, by letter to Matt Betenson, BLM Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument, 669 S. Highway 89A, Kanab, UT 84741, or via email at BLM_UT_GS_comments@blm.gov. You will be added to the project mailing list. Please submit comments by November 9, 2017.

When are the public meetings?

Two public meetings are scheduled at this time. The first is at the Escalante Community Center on October 25th and the second is at the Boulder Community Center on October 26th. Both meetings are from 5 8 pm.

Schedule & EA Process

Project Background

Propose Alternative(s).
Seek Public Input and Hold Public Meeting

Identify Action Alternative(s)

Action Alternative(s) Environmental Analysis

Complete Environmental Analysis/
Draft EA
(16-24 months)

Public Comment Period On Draft EA

Begin Project
(October 2020)



Historic reenactment on Hole in the Rock Road.

To: Christopher McAlear[cmcalear@blm.gov]
From: Edwin Roberson
Sent: 2017-11-01T10:40:31-04:00
Importance: Normal
Subject: Re: CBS This Morning Request to visit Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument Paleo excavation site
Received: 2017-11-01T10:40:53-04:00

Thank you, Chris.

Sent from my iPhone

On Nov 1, 2017, at 10:28 AM, Christopher McAlear <cmcalear@blm.gov> wrote:

FYI
Thinking Jeff missed you

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Krauss, Jeff" <jkrauss@blm.gov>
Date: November 1, 2017 at 9:57:10 AM EDT
To: Michael Nedd <mike_nedd@blm.gov>, John Ruhs <jruhs@blm.gov>, Brian Steed <bsteed@blm.gov>, Cally Younger <cyounger@blm.gov>, Kathleen Benedetto <kbenedetto@blm.gov>, Peter Mali <pmali@blm.gov>, Daniel DuBray <ddubray@blm.gov>, Megan Crandall <mcrandal@blm.gov>, Jeff Brune <jbrune@blm.gov>, Gregory Fuhs <gfuhs@blm.gov>, Christopher McAlear <cmcalear@blm.gov>, Kelly Orr <korr@blm.gov>
Subject: CBS This Morning Request to visit Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument Paleo excavation site

All,
BLM Utah received the following request from CBS This Morning. They are hoping to visit the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument on Thursday, Nov 2 and Nov 3 to visit a dinosaur excavation sites located in the Kaiparowits Plateau region of the Monument; and Friday morning, November 3 in the BLM dinosaur lab in Kanab, Utah.
CBS This Morning Request to visit GSENM Paleo excavation site

Folks, here is a request from CBS This Morning...exact times have not been firmed up with the producer:

CBS This Morning w/Charlie Rose, Gayle King and Norah O'Donnell GSENM Paleontology Program New Discover
requested to visit a "working" dinosaur excavation on Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument and to talk with
While the report will focus primarily on paleontology, it will also cover some of the other science occurring. Monun

number of scientists on Monument staff, numbers of science permits issued annually, types of research conducted and abstracts from the 2006 and 2016 Monument Science Symposiums.

The scientific work being conducted on the Monument is the focus of the story. Spinder acknowledged that many in his audience has been covered ad nauseam and wants this story to concentrate on the scientific work currently being conducted.

Spinder was told his questions to Monument staff will be limited to work being done on the Monument; any questions about parameters.

Though not firm, the tentative media visit will take place all day Thursday, November 2 at dinosaur excavation site located in lab in Kanab, Utah.

This visit represents a wonderful opportunity to showcase the great work being done by GSENM & its partners in the scientific